

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 2, 5 to 8, 10, 19, 20, 22 and 23 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Please amend the remaining claims as follows:

1. to 20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) An ink tank comprising a supply port for leading out ink to the outside, an atmospheric communication port for communication with the air outside, a negative pressure generating member installation chamber in which an ink absorbent is contained, a liquid storage chamber communicated with said negative pressure generating member installation chamber through a communication passage to store ink to be supplied to said negative pressure generating member installation chamber, said liquid storage chamber ~~having~~ being substantially closed with the exception of said communication passage, and a partition wall member defining said communication passage and partitioning said negative pressure generating member installation chamber and said liquid storage chamber, said supply port being adapted to receive an ink supply portion of an ink jet head into an inside of said negative pressure generating member installation chamber,

wherein said ink absorbent is arranged by a fibrous material,  
wherein an outer surface thereof is thermally processed into an outer shape configured for containment in the interior of said ink tank, and wherein said ink absorbent

is contained in a manner that a side face of said ink absorbent corresponding to said supply port of said ink tank is a non-thermally processed cut face;

wherein said ink absorbent in an uncomprssed state has a content volume larger than that of said negative pressure generating member installation chamber, and said non-thermally processed cut face is cut in a state where said ink absorbent is compressed in a compression direction and a compression state which are the same as those when said ink absorbent is inserted into said negative pressure generating member installation chamber;

and

wherein said ink absorbent is inserted into said negative pressure generating member installation chamber in a compression direction and a compression state which are the same as those when said ink absorbent is cut to form said non-thermally processed cut face.

22. and 23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously Presented) An ink absorbent according to Claim 21, wherein said non-thermally processed face is arranged by cutting a thermally processed face and has a hardness softer than the thermally processed face.

Please add Claim 25, as follows:

25. (New) An ink tank comprising:

an ink tank main body including an ink supply portion and an atmospheric communication portion; and

an ink absorbent installed in the ink tank main body, said ink absorbent having thermally-processed faces and at least one non-thermally-processed cut face;  
wherein said ink absorbent in an uncompressed state has a content volume larger than that of said ink tank main body, and said non-thermally processed cut face is cut in a state where said ink absorbent is compressed in a compression direction and a compression state which are the same as those when said ink absorbent is inserted into said ink tank main body; and

wherein said ink absorbent is inserted into said ink tank main body in a compression direction and a compression state which are the same as those when said ink absorbent is cut to form said non-thermally processed cut face.